

Resources

Boston Womens Health Book Collective.
Our Bodies, Ourselves: A New Edition for a New Era. Simon & Schuster, New York, 2005.

Muscio, Inga. Cunt: A Declaration of Independence. 2nd Ed. San Francisco: Seal Press, 2002.

Blood Sisters. Blood Sisters Menstrual Action. www.bloodsisters.org.

Tampax. www.tampax.com.

One Woman. The Red Spot: Menstrual Culture. www.onewoman.com/redspot.

Diva Cup. www.divacup.com.

Museum of Menstruation. www.mum.org.

Venus Envy is an education oriented sex shop and bookstore. Our goal is to provide women and their partners a respectful (and fun!) place where they can find toys and tools to explore their gender and sexuality.

We believe that one of the best tools you can have to enjoy a healthy and erotic sex life is knowledge. To that end, we've developed this series of pamphlets. They are based on our workshops and on the information sheets displayed in our stores.

Our goal is to make positive sex information available to everybody! Our pamphlet series covers many aspects of sex, sexuality, health and relationships. They are always evolving, with new topics being added all the time. We welcome any comments and suggestions that you may have.

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Alternative Menstrual Care Products



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books, sex, health...



Why use Alternative Menstrual Products?

Lack of safety testing and recent health concerns over commercial tampons and pads are causing many women to rethink their choices regarding menstrual products. There are some not-so-apparent risks associated with using the products found at your local pharmacy.

Included in this pamphlet are some of the most common reasons women are switching to friendlier forms of flow control.

Why Use Alternatives?

Adhesive pads are often backed with plastic to prevent spills. Plastic, which is an irritant to many women, is also not porous or breathable and so can lead to bacterial infection and yeast overgrowth. Also, plastic pads and tampon applicators are not biodegradable and so burden our landfills and oceans.

Many tampons contain a blend of cotton and the synthetic fibre rayon to increase absorbency. By providing an excellent growing medium for bacteria, high-absorbency tampons increase the risk of the blood infection known as Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS). Rayon fibers have also been shown to cause

minute tears in the vaginal lining, leaving women prone to infection and irritation. 100% cotton tampons have not been linked to TSS, but the bad news is that the cotton contained in most pads and tampons has been bleached with chlorine. The byproducts of this bleaching process include trace levels of the organochloride dioxin, which remains in both the end product and in the environment. Dioxin residue has been linked to endometriosis, reproductive cancers, birth defects, immune deficiencies and generally unhealthy stuff. As well, the cotton in pads and tampons is usually grown with pesticides. Trace amounts of these chemicals can remain in the finished products, and because menstrual products are in constant contact with delicate tissue for long periods of time, even minute amounts of dioxin and pesticides should be of great concern.

Some Solutions...

Organic Tampons and Pads

Made from 100% organically grown cotton, these tampons contain no synthetic fibers, no pesticides, and no herbicides. They are bleached with hydrogen peroxide rather than chlorine, which leaves none of the harmful dioxin associated with chlorine bleaching.

Sea Sponges

These are small natural sponges usually used for cosmetics. They are cheap, easy to use, and comfortable. Unfortunately, no studies have been done to determine if ocean pollutants remain in sea sponges, but boiling before use may help. Make sure you buy the sponges that have been cleaned with hydrogen peroxide rather than chlorine bleach. Sea Sponges usually last 3-6 periods and can be trimmed to fit more comfortably. Boil for a few minutes before each period to keep extra clean.

The Diva Cup

A reusable cup made of medical grade silicone. The Diva cup carries a very low risk of TSS as it doesn't absorb your vaginal fluids. The Diva is also very eco-friendly as using one Diva cup over its 10 year life span saves you from using and throwing away thousands of disposable tampons and pads.

Cloth Pads

Reusable, breathable and often made by women-owned businesses, washable cotton pads are a great alternative to disposable paper and plastic pads. They are constructed of layers of absorbent flannel and terry. A few pads can last for years with proper care!